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PRELUDES

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PRELUDES

BY

SISTER MARY CLARA, B. V. M.

DUBUQUE
M. S. HARDIE
1914

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MOUNT ST. JOSEPH COLLEGE
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To
MY DEAR MOTHER
MRS. ANNE CANTWELL RUSSELL

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PRELUDES

Love sings on earth in plaintive minor keys
Faint preludes of Life's fuller harmonies.

QUESTIONINGS.

Whither, my soul, are we going?
For time has slipped by unawares;
Here in Life's fields are we sowing
To gather a harvest of tares?
When shall we enter Death's portal
So lowly and dark, you and I?
O Soul, can you help being immortal,
Or can I choose but to die?

Shall the thinker who leaped to the star-lands,
Who dived to the depths of the sea,
Who has woven in history's garlands
A name that forever will be
A word for all nations to cherish,—
Shall you who have learned all the lore
Of the sages, my soul, shall you perish
And one fatal day live no more?

Say, shall you die without earning
A guerdon for sorrow and pain?
Shall all your infinite yearning
For life without end be in vain?
Shall you pass from this world and its hopings
With no hope for the joys that you crave?
Shall all your unsatisfied gropings
Find no answer beyond the dark grave?

But if you, O my soul, live forever,
Shall I, then, forever be dust?
Shall endless eternities sever
You and me and our hope and our trust?
Shall I, your companion, the sharer
Of earth's joys and sorrows, be clod,
While you, the immortal, are bearer
Of bliss in the Vision of God?

ADRIFT.

Unmoored, alone on a trackless sea
In an oarless boat,—
God pity me!

Once I longed to be wild and free
On the deeps afloat,—
God pity me!

Oh! is it now too late to flee
From the whirl-wind's throat?
God pity me!

Loved ones are longing my face to see,
On the shores remote,—
God pity me!

Aye, Thou wilt answer their loving plea,
And bring me home from the stormy sea,
Never again from that home to stray,
Safe-anchored in love and faith alway.

ROOT AND BRANCH.

Buried deep in the dark, damp clay,
Unknown, unloved! Time passes away,
And nobody recks the toilsome hours
That draw from the earth life's hidden powers.

Blossom and fruitage! Men's love and praise
Have come to me from the world's wide ways,
Sunshine and song, and the wild wind's kiss,—
Oh, life is a long, glad dream of bliss!

BUYING BUBBLES.

Child, with laughing eyes and golden hair,
Merry as the butterflies, and sweetly fair,
So happy in thy bright and childish way,
That earth forgets her troubles,
What art thou doing all the summer day?—
Blowing bubbles!

Youth, on pleasure bent at life's new morn,
Seeking thy own self-content, and holding scorn
For all thy young dreams held as joy,
Now, that duty doubles,
What art thou doing, O thou dark-haired boy?—
Buying bubbles!

Man, with eager eyes and gray-streaked hair,
Weighting thy dark soul with lies, dost thou yet dare
To put in balance all thy ill-got gains,
Bright kopecks and rubles?
What art thou doing with unheard-of pains?—
Buying bubbles!

Aged, with fading sight and snowy locks,
Now in the dim twilight, death ever mocks
Thy soul with memories of unworthy strife;
Remorse thy fear redoubles.
How hast thou spent thy long, ambitious life?—
Buying bubbles!

AN APRIL SONG.

The earth is all astir;
Today I heard the whir
Of wings in the silent wood
Where our old swing-tree stood
In the golden long ago.
Do you remember now
Mild April's coming? how
We searched among the hills
For crocus flowers, while gurgling rills
Trinkled softly through the melting snow?

Dearest, come home again,
The cowslips in the lane
And by the meadow's edge
Will wait for you; the hedge
Will never whiten till you're here.
The robins sing no more
So gayly as of yore,
The alders by the river
Can only sigh and quiver,
For oh, they're weary waiting for you, dear.

Our mother's days are sad;
In dreams her little lad
Comes just as long ago he used to come;
But when her arms reach out
To clasp him close about,
Alas! they empty fall,
Her light is darkness all,—
O love, come home, come home!

AYODHYA.

When Ayodhya's eyes turn full upon
Mine own so questioningly,
All the Whences and Whithers of ages gone
Arise and gaze at me.
Life's passion and pain are still adream;
(Oh, dread awakening hour
If e'er her woman's heart misdeem
Their purpose and their power!)
But watching where they sleep I see
Pale ghosts of a thousand Whys,
For her whole sad race looks out at me
From Ayodhya's wistful eyes.

PRAYER WITHOUT WORDS.

(Post Communion)

This morn my heart is full of song; and still
When to my lips it comes, the music dies,—
The power to sing my God to me denies.
Thy grace divine Thou gavest, Lord, until
With every thought of Thee my pulses thrill;
And swift to Heaven and Thee my glad soul flies
On wings of love; and "Dearest Lord," it cries,
"Let me but voice my prayer if 'tis Thy will.
Mayhap some other soul who struggles here
Will find in it new hope, new love for Thee,
Some weary soul oppressed with doubt and fear."
But Jesus in my breast so lovingly
Speaks to my heart in accents low and clear:
"My child, today in silence worship Me."

EXPRESSION.

Sing out, soul, bravely
Whatever is within you
Of joy and hope;
Chirp or carol, lightly, gravely,
E'en though no place it win you
In fame's wide horoscope.
Listen! a nightingale
Atremble with love and pain
In that pomegranate tree
Sings to the star-beams pale
Song after song again,—
A wingèd ecstacy.
But does the cricket
With tuneful craking
His tabor cease to play
In yonder thicket?
Oh, no! both are making
Psalmody,—nature's way.

A MEMORY.

For years within the pages of this book it lay,
You placed it there, that wildweed flower;
And, oh! when I beheld it there today,
The stream of time swept backward to that hour
Beside the meadow brook; the violets bloomed again,
The sunlight shone, the sky was blue;
And for a time my heart forgot its pain,—
I lived again that hour of bliss with you.

MY BIRTHRIGHT.

My birthright is the meadows and green fields,
Deep wooded hills and brooks' low singing,
And hallowed joys that dearest home-life yields
When youth and love are freshly springing.
God pity him whoever basely sells
His treasure for a mess of pottage,
Despising lowly peace that dwells
Love-guarded in a low white cottage.

Thank God that my young life was taught
Amid those simple scenes of childhood
Strong, loving faith in Him which brought
His presence to the fragrant wildwood,
And made me feel His power in all,—
Our cries to Him the young lambs' bleating,
In murmuring winds I heard His call,—
True symbol of our Shepherd's greeting.

My home is still a sacred shrine
At which my thoughts as pilgrims thronging
Seek every day some grace divine
With tender trust and ardent longing.
O true home-love to bless and save
In faith and joy my whole life steeping!
O dear, dear Heart of Christ that gave
So good a birthright to my keeping!

NOVEMBER MISTS.

Mists on the hill-tops afar,
And mists in the valley between;
Mists where the pine-trees are
Under the moonrays' sheen.

The white-robed earth seems cold, dear,
In its misty cerements laid;—
Can it be the earth of old, dear,
Where we, glad children, played?

Must pallor come to all things,—
To your cheek so soft and fair?
Must whiteness mar the beauty
Of your sunny, golden hair?

What matter if earth be cold, dear,
If your heart be warm and true?
We shall live and love as of old, dear,
'Neath skies of summer blue.

SONG.

(From the German of Freidrich Rückert)

Wouldst thou draw from hearts of men
    Harmonies of heavenly birth?
Touch the chords attuned to pain,
    Not the clanging notes of mirth.
Many a one is happy here,
    Knowing naught of earthly cheer;
None who hath not stood the test
    Of sorrow's sword within his breast.

POINT OF VIEW.

(Persian Proverb.)

So you aver that every bud you pluck a thorn discloses?
Nay, rather think that briars are all abloom with fragrant roses.

A PHILOSOPHER.

(1902)

Yes, Reverend Sir, I sent for you; perhaps
A sick man's whim. Oh, thank you. Take the chair
Beside the window where the breeze blows cool;
That fan was buzzing so confoundedly
I ordered Pettigrew to turn it off.
You're wondering why I sent for *you*,—
By jiminy! hear those rooters shout,
That field is nearly half a mile away;
The Cubs and Sox are at it hard, I guess.
Well, let them play who can, a different game
Awaits a man who's face to face with death. . . .
Oh, just a matter of a month or so;
Old Galen bids me count on years of life,
But he has many ways of being kind. . . .
No, not to argue, Father; I'm convinced;
I simply want a listener today,—
That human need to speak your mind to one
Who lends a sympathetic ear without
Tormenting you with banal formulas. . . .
Baptized? Of course; I lost my head at school
In learning crazy systems, creedless creeds;
Declared myself agnostic like the rest
Who covet little glories cheaply bought,
Who stake their souls to strut the stage an hour
And play the role of philosophic fool.
Read Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley and our Chief,
The great philosopher who brought, 'twas said,
Encyclopaedic knowledge to his task,
Whose strength lay in his logic,—all his work
Outpourings of a logical machine
With levers, cranks adjusted to preclude

The possibility of error. Well,
That pretty prelude captured me at once;
Our Cinderella, Science, doomed to drudge
While haughty sisters flaunt their fripperies!
Behold the dénouement! A Prince is come,
And Science, worth and beauty, reigns supreme.

A fitter regulative system must
(A pressing need) replace decadent creeds
Supposed to be of sacred origin.
It seemed at first a goodly doctrine, Sir,—
From lofty heights of thought to contemplate
That far-off life our race may yet enjoy,
And feel calm pleasure in the consciousness
Of having helped to perfect its estate.
And so we strove to climb, but often found
A desert where we sought a mountain-top.
Assurance sometimes failed; what clearly seemed
An oasis of truth fled mirage-like,
And principles were piled on principles.
But "Facts and Comments"—there 'twixt Hercules
And Niobe upon the mantel-piece
Among some other curios,—has proved
The straw that broke the patient camel's back.
I read it twice to make conviction sure,—
A dying wail from our philosopher
Who now with senile wit and trembling hands
Pulls down upon our heads the temple reared
Through fifty years of toil. Our Master asks:
"Shall e'er I see again the buds unfold?
Or hear again the thrushes sing at dawn?"
He tells us, too, that out of consciousness
Come deeper questions haunting him like ghosts,—
Those old beliefs that will not fossilize.
Because the end cannot be long postponed
The riddle of existence must be solved!—

Forsooth, I thought eleven folios
Had answered all our Whences, Whithers, Whys.
He swept the world for ancient theories,
Improved the worn-out Sinaitic code,
Cast off old sloughs of superstition; then
With scientific skill refashioned truth
With ample liberty for human thought
In truth's sole test, conceivability.
He now admits the riddle stands unread;
To me the whole Synthetic System seems
A toy-house built by Echo and the Sphinx.
In measuring our results we oft mistake
Mere outward semblances for facts. A man
Who loves the light in little children's eyes,
Who joys in honest human laughter, knows
The love of friends, the worth of human tears,
Whose soul is thrilled in looking to the stars,
Who wonders at the miracle of dawn,
Can never be agnostic through and through;—
Another way of saying, I suppose,
That man has heart as well as intellect:
Experience proves men's hearts must needs be fed
With something other than agnostic husks.
Of late old memories come back again,
A favorite hymn my mother used to sing,
A sermon in a little country church,—
The preacher neither eloquent, nor wise
With human wisdom,—simple words and plain
About disciples toiling in the night.
Oh, what's the use? Eternal Energy
Stand up and take the place of God!—All bosh,
This cant about a Power Inscrutable!
The gutter-snipe who knows but chapter one
Of his old catechism knows far more
Of truth than Herbert Spencer ever guessed.

We have our moods, and this was mine today,—
To score the book that tells a sorry tale.
You'll come again, and be my homeward guide
Through long untrodden paths? Remember me
In that tremendous Sacrifice of love
And praise you offer daily. Father, pray
For me,—for faith's increase by which indeed
Is victory. 'Twere well to give the mind
Its proper food; to set the intellect
The tasks for which God purposed it, to build
Its coral-isles of theory; to learn
The laws and causes of existences;
But when you come to die, an ounce of faith
Outweighs a ton of philosophic lore.

Suppose we talk of other things awhile?—
There go the champions from the diamond;
What splendid fellows! Ah,—the Sox have won.

IN MEMORIAM.

"Was death so sweet?" Aye, Life hovered a moment, lovingly, alone,
As the last sunbeam lingers in the west.
Softly the death-angel, winging his flight from regions sown
With song, lifted her soul, pure in its lilied rest,
To ope in fuller beauty near the Master's throne.
"Who was she?" One whom God hath blest,
Had loved with everlasting love, and called
To rich inheritance—love's deep mine
Of self-effacement. No worldly glory's shadow palled
The brightness of that soul, forevermore the shrine
Of heaven's sweet splendors. "Belovèd," we said, "unthralled
By earthly fetters, haste thee to joys divine!"

JOY AND SORROW.

I walked with Joy in glad companionship
Across life's morning meadows, dew-impearled;
Fond eyes sought faith in mine, or lip to lip
We sealed love's tender vows,—O happy world!

Once as we walked together, she and I,
A shadow fell between us where we stood;
A cross, a light, a something floating by
Called me. No longer Joy seemed all life's good.

My comrade saw the change. "Adieu," she said;
"I go to seek new loves, for you have grown
Of Joy aweary!" Then I knew my love was dead;—
But somehow I rejoiced to be alone.

I walked with Sorrow. Oft I said, "Depart,
O baneful shadow!" Or on bended knee,
Pausing awhile, I cried with aching heart,
"O Father, let this chalice pass from me!"

Years came and went; and still with that stern guide
I worked and prayed. At length upon a day
I missed her constant presence from my side—
How strange life seemed! Sorrow had gone away!

"O dear, familiar friend," I cried in grief,
"O heavenly teacher, come again to me,
For I have learned to love thee past belief,
My soul received her light and strength through thee!"

TWO ROSES.

Two roses bloomed on the selfsame stem,
And true was the love that guarded them.

The roses plucked from the parent thorn,
Two different ways one night were borne,—

One to a chapel dim and small,
And one to the blaze of a fancy-ball.

The morning dawned; in the filthy street
One rose is crushed under trampling feet;

As the life-tide ebbs her cold lips say,
"Where is my sister rose today?"

One leaned from a vase of costly art,
And breathed her love to the Sacred Heart;

But through her joy came a nameless fear—
"Ah, would that my lovèd one were here!"

SUMMER SONG.

Thank God for the breeze,
For the birds and the trees!
Thank God for the grass and flowers,
For the blue, blue skies that bend above us,
For the true, true friends He has sent to love us
In this beautiful world of ours!

THE FIRST EASTER.

O'er Judean hills the dawn is creeping,
Bringing the day with its griefs again;
On her lowly couch is Mary sleeping,
O'er-wrought by the Passion's awful pain.
Often she breathes His name in dreaming
Sorrowful dreams of her bitter loss
On Calvary's mount,—the mother seeming
To stand again 'neath the mournful Cross.

But list! a strain as of angels singing
Soft and clear through the morning air,
An echo of heaven-born music bringing
To the lonely couch of the sleeper there.
The strain takes on a joyful wording,
And the mother stirs in her troubled dreams:
But what are the angels' songs recording
As the light o'er Judean hill-sides streams?

"Regina Cœli, lætare!" thrilling,
And "Alleluia!" in chorus strong:
In the light that all the world is filling
The mother wakes with the angels' song.
And there in the midst of the brightness beaming
She sees her Son, and she hears His voice:
"Mother!" Ah, this cannot be dreaming,
For the angels are bidding her soul rejoice.

But come away! It were rash presuming
To tell of that meeting with mortal tongue;
With the light of Heaven our souls illuming,
We shall hear the story by angels sung.
O Heart of Christ! on some Easter morning
We shall learn the strength of thy love divine;
We shall sound the depths of that tender warning:
"My child, let thy heart be always Mine."

SONG.

Sing, O my heart,
Sing merrily;
Sorrow and pain depart,—
Live cheerily.

Ah! but the gloom was deep—
Shadows e'er darkening,
Till thy light song did leap
To my soul's harkening!

Then darkness fled away
Into the shadowland;
Then trilled the lark her lay
Sweet in the meadowland.

Soul answered soul, my dear,
Swifter than lightning!
Came thy glad message clear,
All the world brightening.

Sing, then, O heart of mine,
Sing cheerily,—
Love bringeth joy divine,—
Live verily!

A LEGEND OF ST. JOSEPH.

We knelt at the foot of the altar,
And prayed to the dear humble saint,
The greatest and yet the most hidden,
The freest from all earthly taint.
And through the stained glass of the window
A glimmer of light in the gloom,
Touched the staff in the hand of the statue
And the pale flowers burst into bloom.

Adèla looked up in amazement,
Then fixed her blue eyes on my face,
And, "Why has St. Joseph the flowers?"
She whispered with innocent grace.
Adown the long aisle we went slowly,
And into the wide busy street;
Then I told to Adèla the story—
The old legend quaint and sweet.

"Long, long ago in the courts of the temple
A maiden dwelt, wondrously fair;
From all the broad land of Judea
Came suitors to claim her love there;
Among them, the carpenter, Joseph,
Had asked for the fair virgin's hand;
But Joseph was lowly and humble,
Though descended from kings of the land.

"The priests in the temple were doubtful,
And knowing not how to decide,
They prayed for a sign from Jehovah
For him who should claim her his bride.
They bade all the suitors of Mary
Bring rods from the fields, dry and bare,
To be placed on the steps of the altar:
'Twas done, and the rods were left there.

"Next morning, came into the temple
The priests for their matinal hours;
They looked at the wands on the altar—
Lo! Joseph's was budding with flowers
All fresh in their bloom and their beauty;
Then they knew 'twas the will of the Lord
That Joseph should wed the young virgin,
And Mary was pleased with the word.

"And so our St. Joseph, the humble,
Thus won his immaculate bride,
The mother of Jesus our Savior
Who to save us has suffered and died."

A POET'S THOUGHT.

When I am dead, will old friends gather near,
And look on my white face, and drop a tear
In grief? Who knows? Will they repeat
A verse or two of mine, and say, "'Tis sweet"?
Will e'er a song I sang live in one heart
To glad a weary hour, to ease the smart
Of some soul-wound?—The wild blue violet
Blooms deep in woodland vales, and yet
Fulfills its mission though it dies unknown
Breathing its fragrance unto God alone.
So if our life, our death are in His hand,
What matter whether high or low we stand?
For when the tired heart is stilled fore'er,
God fills the soul—what's praise or blame to her?

O QUEEN OF MAY!

The heavens wear the hue
Of Mary's mantle blue,
And all the earth is clad in bright array;
With many a fervent prayer,
Thy children everywhere
Look up with love to thee, O Queen of May!

The wild bird chorus thrills,
And o'er the distant hills
The winds bring perfume from the flow'ry spray;
The surpliced orchard trees
Are chanting litanies
Of praise and love to thee, O Queen of May!

From every hill and plain
There comes a low refrain,
That to the heart its message bears alway;
I hear the purling streams,
And all their music seems
A song of love for thee, O Queen of May!

And shall my voice be still,
While bird and bloom and rill
Are singing in thy praise a roundelay?
Oh, teach me, Holy One,
The daughter of Thy Son,
To hymn my love to thee, O Queen of May!

THE FUGUE.

"Amen!" sang soprano;
"Amen!" growled the bass;
"Amen!" moaned the alto,
With tenor in place.

A moment of silence
Most restful, and then
With vigor renewed
They attacked the amen.

"Amen! A-Amen!! A-A-Amen!!!
A-A-A-Amen!!!! Amen!!"
Rambling and scrambling,
And tumbling and fumbling,
And wavering and quavering,
And singing and ringing,
And quailing and wailing,—
Notes high and low blended,
Till all vigor failing,
The grand fugue was ended.

Down near the door
Of the church, in the crowd,
An old woman knelt,
In reverence bowed.

But she turned to her neighbor
And whispered: "Ah, then,
Why couldn't they decide
Who would have the amen?
Sure, to scramble like that,
And to fight for the word,
It isn't becomin'
In the house o' the Lord."

THE ROSARY.

Fair are the snow-white roses
Heaven-blest in their purity;
They were laid at the feet
Of the Virgin sweet
In lowly Galilee.
We think of the morn
When Christ was born
'Neath the starry eastern skies;
In their fragrant breath
Dreams of Nazareth
And the hidden glories rise.

Blest are the red, red roses
That tell of the Passion's pain
And the saving flood
Of Christ's Precious Blood
That washes away each stain.
Ah! the crimson tide
From his piercèd side
New life to a lost world brings,
Though with thorny crown
And the purple gown,
It has mocked the King of kings.

Bright are the golden roses,—
Earth's darkness and pain are o'er,
And the light divine
Will clearly shine
In our souls forevermore.
O golden, golden roses,
Symbols of victories won,
With you the chaplet closes
When the round of life is done.

A MEMORY.

I.

Long ago—aye, five-and-twenty years,
(How swift time's flight!)
She heard the call divine: "Child, let thy heart be Mine;"
Earth's purest joys, the friends whom love endears,
Home's sweet delight,
Were left for His dear sake, who said,
(Ah, mystic word!)
"Thou hast not chosen Me, but I have chosen thee."
Safe by Love's guiding spirit led,
She found her Lord.

II.

Of the world's work God giveth lovingly
To each his part;
A promise breathed low that sweet day long ago,
Bound her, dear Christ, to follow Thee.
(O brave young heart!)
With joys unknown before her pulses thrill,
(Love's recompense.)
Content to bear the Cross, to suffer earthly loss,
For heavenly gain, only to do His will.
(Faith true, intense!)

III.

And now God views the record of those days;
How reads the scroll?
In all that He has willed, is His design fulfilled
Faithfully in Heaven's appointed ways?
(Attend, O soul.)
Which of the vanished yesterdays is best?
(O lips, speak low!)
The one when fell the rod,—her heart leaped forth to God,
The Cross was borne, was loved, at His behest.
('Twas better so.)

IV.

God's love and power are with her in the strife,
To grace allied;
Amid the world's acclaim one dear and sacred Name
Sweetens the weary tasks of life;
(O heart long-tried!)
What ceaseless, daily toil, what vigils of the night,
(In Heaven is rest),
What ardent hearts of youth were led to know the truth,
Guided through darkness to the light,
God knoweth best.

WINTER SONG.

(From the German of Josef von Eichendorff)

I dreamed that I rested again
  Near my father's house as of yore;
All-fragrant from valley and plain
  Glad zephyrs their wild fragrance bore.
They played 'mid the old linden trees
  That gently their young blossoms shed.—
Borne far by each wandering breeze,
  Bloom-showers o'er my breast and my head.

I awoke from my dreaming too soon:
  The valley and forest I scanned,
Above the wood's edge a pale moon
  Shone yellow upon a strange land.
The region was covered with snow,
  Showers of icicles gleamed in the air;
All white were the gulches below,
  And white from old age was my hair.

MY STAR.

Gleam redly, my star, in the night,
  Shine far over life's troubled sea,—
O guide me, thou sweet Altar-Light,
  To my Love Who is waiting for me.

FIRST FRIDAY.

O starry lights upon the altar burning,
O happy flowers consumed with love for Him
To Whom our thoughts, our hearts' desires are turning,
O fragrant incense in the chapel dim!
Ye whisper prophecies of rites to be
When time has yielded to eternity.

Dear Sacred Heart, within the monstrance longing
For each small tribute of Thy children's love,
O give to us around Thy altar thronging
Thy peace and joy, when like the wearied dove,
In wandering far from this beloved retreat
No place is found to rest our tired feet.

THE HIGHER SONG.

Immortal Tuscan! thou hast found thy way
Unto that mountain steep of joyful pain
Whereon is heard the clear melodious strain
Of holy souls whose office is to pray,
To wait in cleansing fires,—a sad delay—
Till all atonement done, and every stain
Effaced, they'll sing a glad refrain
At dawning of the bright, eternal day.

"Remember me! at least you, O my friends,"
A loved one calls through all the long
November hours when Holy Church extends
Her arms to plead with God in strong
Sweet tones for mercy and reprieve, and sends
World-wide the appeal of Dante's higher song.

VOICES OF THE DYING.

I hear them calling, calling to me
From earth's far bounds,
A low and dolorous sighing,—
The Voices of the Dying;
They send a thrill of pity through me,
Those lamentable sounds,
Forever crying, crying,
"Pray, oh, pray for us!"
Then to Our Father turning
With a heart's insatiate yearning,
Beseechingly, I thus:
"O Father, Heavenly Father,
Thy boundless mercy rather
Than justice glorify
In those about to die.
O manifest Thyself to them, dear Lord;
Let Thy most holy Face
With its calm power of grace
Bend tenderly above
Their dying-place;
Speak Thou one only word
And they will die of love,
Of love for Thee
Who died of love for them upon the Tree!"

Then comes another thought:
"Our Father, if in aught
My prayer doth please Thee,
When death's cold hand will seize me,
Let mercy be to me
Who e'er hath prayed to Thee
For souls in agony.
If some for love be saved,
Wilt tell them that a friend

Perhaps at earth's far end
Had prayed that they be laved
In the Precious Blood of Christ? Then each to me
May prove a friend in mine own agony.

When they lay my body under
Dear Carmel's smooth-cut grass
Where saintly footsteps pass
And white-veiled Sisters come,
How many friends, I wonder,
Will give an exiled spirit welcome Home?

MINNEHAHA.

Dear Minnehaha! long I stood
  Delighted with your laughter,
A merry song in solitude
  Heard all my days thereafter,
A memory dear my thoughts will seek
  Awaking or adreaming,
Your dainty spray upon my cheek,—
  Below, your rainbow gleaming.
Laugh on, in shadow and in sun
  Through all the summer weather,
Recall the golden days long gone
  When she and I together
Beheld in fancy as we read,
  The Arrowmaker's daughter,—
Wept when the parting words were said:
  "Farewell, O Laughing Water!"

HEART-FLOWERS.

It bloomed in my heart,—my flower of love
To all the world unknown;
It was mine, mine only, my treasure-trove,
It lived for my soul alone.

One day a stranger passing by,
With rude hand plucked my flower;
Thenceforth 'twas seen of every eye,—
Ah! that was a bitter hour!

My sweet heart-blossom was rudely torn
From its sacred soil and true,
Upon the winds its fragrance borne,
And many paused to view.

And some men wondered, and some were glad;
To many souls it brought
A heavenly balm, for it cheered the sad
With a loving, tender thought.

So I learned that our fragrant, sweet heart-flowers
Are gifts of God, not given
For secret, selfish ends of ours,
But to turn men's thoughts to Heaven.

LA MORT ET LA VIE.

A moins que la chenille ne donne sa vie
Le joli papillon ne vole pas, ravi
Du radieux soleil qui dore ses ailes. La mort
Produit une vie plus complète. Laissez alors
Mourir le laid pour que la beautè s'enivre,
Perisse le corps si l'esprit doit survivre.

LETTERS FROM HOME.

Dear leaves that have blown to my feet from the old roof-tree,
Tender and loving and true, they are dearest of all to me;
Lines from a fond mother's trembling pen, each word a prayer,
Thoughts from a father's deep heart-courses, manfully there;
Breathings of sisterly love that have sweetened and brightened
my life,
And clarion notes of a heroic brother's success in the strife.

Here in these letters are pictures of loved ones and home
That clearly define themselves whithersoever I roam,—
A Temple of Truth where Love held the worshipers fast,
Whence forever the voices of prayer come to me from the
beautiful past.
Dear hearts that have loved me so fondly, go where I will
My heart is enshrined on the altar of home, and the song echoes
still.

RECOLLECTIONS OF WHITBY.

At Whitby on the rugged English coast,
One summer noon we walked, Miriam and I;
The dark cliffs rose to meet the moor—a free
Wild beauty in a wilder beauty lost;
The Esk low crooning of old days, flowed by
Into the bosom of the northern sea.

We two, Americans, oft longed for home,
The land of all lands best; but we had sought
That far remote and unfrequented place
Where wonder-seeking tourists seldom come—
Yorkshire, wherein our fathers lived and fought,
And died, and lived anew, a kingly race,
In song and story, there to steep our souls
In old traditions,—to live again
Forgotten days of Celt and Saxon chiefs;
To listen when the noise of battle rolls,
Hearing old echoes that the conquering thane
Woke centuries long gone near Streoneshalh reefs.

And so at Whitby in that summer noon
We wandered. Far below quaint, picturesque,
The town lay dreaming; near at hand
The Abbey ruin—cloisters overgrown
With creeping vines and moss in forms grotesque,
The symbol of a mighty past,—a land
Now desolate. There stands Whitby Hall,
Whose stones once echoed back the matin song,
The Vesper prayer of sainted souls unknown
Beyond the sacred Abbey's cloistered wall,
But dear to God for Whom they lived through long
And patient years,—for Him their virtues shone.
No more the voice of prayer at eventide
Ascends to heaven as in the olden days,

The days of England's glory unsurpassed;
But we may learn how souls were sanctified,
May drink deep wisdom from those old-world ways,—
For men gain strength and courage from the past.

"My learned friend," quoth Miriam,—here
She balanced on her dainty finger-tips
An ammonite,—"tell me, do you know
The story of the Abbess Hilda, dear
To English hearts, and told by English lips
Since Saxon days twelve centuries ago?"
But nought knew I of saints or saintly lore;
So, close beneath the ruined abbey wall,
Miriam and I together, side by side
Sat, while she with loving faith told o'er
The story of the Abbess Hilda, learned in all
Earth's goodly lore, in heaven now glorified.

"A pagan princess of Northumbrian fame,
She loved the Christian faith, and early learned
Its precepts. (That Paulinus by whose hands
She was baptized, from Canterbury came
As Christ's ambassador, and overturned
The heathen idols in these northern lands.)
She built upon the lonely Streoneshalh rock
A monastery, ruled it well, lived long,
And when with noble deeds her life was crowned,
She died, a benefactress to her race. Through shock
Of falling thrones, and oft triumphant wrong,
St. Hilda's name lives honored and renowned.

"The simple folk finding these geologic forms"—
Here Miriam held the serpent-stone to view,
The fossil ammonite,—"in ancient lore
Wove a tradition that invading swarms
Of serpents had been turned to stone through

Blessed Hilda's prayer, on Whitby's shore.
They say that during many centuries
The Lady Hilda's figure oft was seen
In tranquil noons when summer touched the hill,
There in the topmost window near the frieze,
Where sunbeams weave a beauteous golden sheen,—
The guardian of her lovèd people still.
All lost, the twilight legends of our youth,
In noonday glare of scientific search,
Yet one remains,—a story of old days,
No empty legend, but historic truth,
Told in the early annals of the Church,—
How Saxon Cædmon wrote his paraphrase."

And Miriam paused, not doubting that I knew
The tale. Across the rocks long shadows fell.
O'erhead a sea-gull winged its lonely flight
Eastward across the deep to where the blue
Of heaven meets the ocean's blue. . . . . "The spell
Of ancient days is round us on this height,"
I whispered: "My Miriam, tell to me
The story of the Saxon Cædmon." . . . Her gaze
Rested awhile on that bleak cliff where laps
The long wave of the northern sea;
At last she said, speaking her thought, "God's ways
Are wondrous. Cædmon, heathen-born, perhaps
Had sung of Woden, not of Christ; of grim
Old Saxon warriors, not of Abram's race,—
For deep in Pagan darkness, he erstwhile
Knew nought of God nor Christ,—but, drawn by Him,
His soul awoke, illumined by His grace
Whose light shone clear from famed Iona's isle.
A herdsman in the monastery fields
At Whitby here, St. Hilda's dear retreat,
The lowly Cædmon, all unknown to fame,
Strove by the love which true devotion yields

To God and fellow-man, in service meet,
To bear in very truth his Christian name.

Once at a merry harvest festival,
When harp went round, and bearded Saxons sang
The ballads of old days, of conquered foes,
Cædmon was asked to sing a madrigal.
With jeering laughter loud the table rang,—
'Twas known that Cædmon could not sing. He rose,
And wandered forth into the summer night.
The mystic moonlight made strange arabesque
Of shadows where he sat; a faint breeze crept
Up from the sea to Whitby's height;
He heard the low weird murmur of the Esk;
O'ercome by night's soft magic, Cædmon slept.

Into his sleep a marvelous vision came,
Sea, river, cliff, and convent tower
Seemed all ablaze. Then chanced a wondrous thing:
Th' effulgent beams concentrated in one flame
Of heavenly glory at that midnight hour;
God's angel spake; his words were: "Cædmon, sing."
Humbly the herdsman made reply
In trembling tones: "I cannot sing; therefore
I left the harvest feast and revelry."
Again mid splendors vast of earth and sky,
Sweet music fell; angelic words once more
Heard Cædmon:, "Nathless, thou'lt sing for me."

"And what," asked Cædmon, "wilt thou have me sing?"
"Of God's creation sing." . . . Then Cædmon thought
His soul was rapt to heaven; with deep amaze
The herdsman saw the glory of the King;
He heard majestic harmonies, and caught
Words ardent, wonderful of prayer and praise.

When Cædmon woke, the dawn's magnificence
Was purpling cliff and headland; from the sea
The golden mist arose like matin offerings.
In glorious strains, of God's omnipotence
He sang in England's morn of melody,
Sweet as our English lark at morning sings.

The Abbess Hilda heard of Cædmon's dream,
And learned council called to judge its worth;—
Herdsman no more, but gifted monk, his days
Were given to write creation's holy theme.
St. Bæda thus records the heavenly birth
Of English poesy, in Cædmon's paraphrase."

Then Miriam paused, the story done. . . . It seemed
A time for silence. There we two, alone
Beside the Abbey wall, watched the long,
Dark shadows creep across the rock where dreamed
The herdsman. Then in low sweet monotone
Miriam said o'er some lines of Cædmon's song:

"Now must we praise the Guardian of Heaven,
The great Creator's power, His wisdom infinite,
The work of Him, Father omnipotent;
How He, the Lord Eterne, for sons of men
Shaped erst their roof, the skies, and then the earth.
Oh, praise we Him, the glorious King of Hosts."

The North Sea answered from its caverns old,
And caught loud echoes from the Yorkshire hills,
The joyful melody of Cædmon's fame.
Time passed; we lingered still, while sunset gold
Ensplendored rock and sea mid peace that fills
The hallowed spot which bears St. Hilda's name.

TO DEATH.

For many, many years I walked with Death
So close beside,
I felt upon my cheek his frosty breath,—
O faithful guide!
Do not depart, I pray thee; still vouchsafe,
My somber friend,
To teach me God's deep truths, to lead me safe
Unto the end.

AT BEMIDJI'S GRAVE.

O wonderful, waving pines,
Whom doth your mourning deplore?
And what is the song that you sing?
It seemeth a requiem over the dead
Who slumbers here 'neath the ground I tread,—
An Indian hunter, an Indian king
Learned in all the forest lore,
A humble factor in God's designs.

O quaintly carven gravestone lines,
'Tis an old, old story you tell;
Even from Biblical days of yore
How often the pitiful words are sighed:
He lived, aye, so many years, and he died,
Earth's joys and sorrows alike are o'er.
Bemidji! rest in thy quiet cell
Under the murmuring pines!

SOUL TO SOUL.

Somewhere, Belovèd, in the great To-Be
We'll meet, my soul and thine,
When earthly masks are dropped, and thou shalt see
How much of my life's love went out to thee,
What grief, what tears were mine.

Some time, Belovèd, thou wilt understand
That faith and prayer are best;
Thou'lt know how oft a loving Father's hand
Poured me the chalice in this exile-land
That thy soul might be blest.

And oh, Belovèd, on some golden day
With all earth sorrow past,
Shall I receive the boon for which I pray?
Wilt thou forever put vain thoughts away
And love the truth at last?

AUTUMN SONG.

Autumn leaves are falling, falling
Where the long brown shadows lie,
Autumn winds are calling, calling,
"All things fairest soonest die."

Summer joys are fleeting, fleeting;
Soon they've vanished in the past;
Worldly pleasure's cheating, cheating,—
Earthly love grows cold at last.

Darksome pines are sighing, sighing,
Over graves where lost ones sleep,—
Warning voices crying, crying,
"As thou sowest thou shalt reap."

OUR LADY OF LIGHT.

Thou comest, O Mother of beautiful love,
Fair as the moon in the calm skies above,
Bright as the sun in its zenithward way,
Strong as an army in battle array,
Tenderly loved as the pure Morning Star,
Whose radiance gladdens our world from afar,
Welcome as dawn after earth's dreary night,
O Splendor of Heaven, our Lady of Light!

BESIDE THE SEA.

My ships put out to sea: the purple morn
Made glad the orient, and touched the mist
Upon the headlands; pink, gold, amethyst
Enwrapped the cradle of the day newborn.
The free, wild birds upon the flow'ry thorn
Made melody; and in their morning tryst
The yielding shore and eager ocean kissed.
Afar was heard the shepherd's joyful horn.

I walk beside the deep: the sullen rocks
Now spurn the snarling sea that mocks
Resistance: the cold bleak sky is flecked
With clouds—and oh! my argosies are wrecked—
The gray mews shriek, "Wrecked! wrecked!" the vengeful sea
Tosses the ruins forth in fiendish glee.

THE VOICE OF HOPE.

Despair's black night had fallen on my soul,
No kindly star shone in the angry skies,
No friendly light repaid my straining eyes.
O God! the deep, dull pain! the lost control
Of every sense! around me darkly stole
A mad desire for death; love, sacrifice
Were gulfed in bitter seas no more to rise,
Where waves of dire discord unceasing roll.

Athwart the moor a faint light whitely gleamed,
A voice from out the 'wildering darkness seemed
To call my soul and gently bid it come
To light and happiness and its true home
Upon the hilltops, never more to grope
In the dark vale;—it was the Voice of Hope.

HARVEST HOME.

The full ripe sheaves are garnered, and the long
Hard day of toil at last is o'er: the bright
Full-orbèd moon illumes the summer night;
And from bereaven fields the gleaners throng
With gladdening shouts of joy and happy song.
The weary toilers gather with delight
Around the festal board, and many a light
Free laugh and gleeful tale the feast prolong.

All gone—the days of toil and moonlit eves,
The joyous feast beneath the elms' arched dome;
All hushed except the murmur of the leaves.
When to life's harvest-fields in silence come
The angel reapers gathering in their sheaves,
O may we sing eternal Harvest Home!

AMONG THE MYRTLE TREES.

The holy silence of the Sabbath night
Is come: and lo! among the myrtle trees
In the deep vale the aged prophet sees
A heavenly horseman clad in raiment bright,
And many horses, speckled, red and white.
Thus Zacharias speaks: "Lord, what are these?"
Thus he who stands among the myrtle trees,
Whose manlike form reveals angelic might:
"They whom to walk through the earth the Lord hath sent."
And answering said the angels of the blest—
Good words in tones of wondrous ravishment:
"We walked through earth at His benign behest;
Behold we found in time of days thus spent,
The world inhabited and all at rest."

OCTAVE.

O Theodora, Gifts of God, go forth,
Go east, west, south and north,
Fulfill His purpose in your quest
To find some heart wherein may rest
Your thoughts of Him who oft prepares
With curious art His loving snares
For souls the centuries along,
And weaves His nets from little threads of song.

MAY SONG.

Sweetheart, we went Maying
In the olden time,—
I remember you were saying
In a little rhyme,
You would be a poet
And would sing alway,
So the world should know it,
Of the Queen of May.

You have chosen meetly
Not a poet's life,
Yet methinks more sweetly
Sings a happy wife.
Baby arms are clinging
While you softly pray,—
In a low voice singing
To the Queen of May.

A PERSONAL QUESTION.

In our common daily work
There's a duty none should shirk
Though life's tasks are oft in vexing hazard whirled;
Each soul should give some gladness
To lessen human sadness,—
Do you do your share of laughing in the world?

Like the quickening summer wind
That leaves its warmth behind
By which the soft rose-petals are unfurled,
Cheerfulness will banish care,
Scatter blessings everywhere,—
Do you do your share of laughing in the world?

In sorrow's gloomy day
A laugh will scare away
The serpent close beside your pathway curled,
The genuine heart-laughter
That leaves no shadow after,—
Do you do your share of laughing in the world?

RENAMED.

Fool they called him, the merry crowd
From which he fled when the mirth was loud.
Afar from human haunts he went,
And his life in prayer and penance spent.
With his brave soul freed from earthly taint,
He died at last, and they called him Saint.

A WONDER-WORLD.

Beyond the dark and heavy-bolted Gates of Sense
A Land of Beauty lies. The dawn's magnificence
Might be as well described to one who never saw,
As this fair realm of light and peace where love is law,
To him who hath not trod its sacred ways, nor seen
The loveliness of her who reigns its crownèd Queen,
Nor fed his soul with glories of the mighty King
Around whose throne, entranced, the fiery Seraphs sing.
No far-off shadow-land it is, for all may enter there
Each day, each hour at will,—the Wonder-World of Prayer.

HOLY HILL.

Majestic there against the dawn rose-tinted, calm
As a dream-rapt prophet, symbol of that full psalm
Whose matin strains arise from consecrated hearts to thrill
Heaven's utmost bourns, church-crowned, you seem, O Holy Hill,
A sacramental thing; at noon, at evensong
What toilsome lives are comforted, what souls made strong
By looking to your height!
Hill of my dreams, although
A wandering spirit leads me far, and far I go,
My storm-tost heart turns back along remembered years,
And through becalming mists of slowly gathering tears
My eyes your beacon seek,—dear shrine wherefrom o' nights
Gleams far the hallowed tower-lamp of the Carmelites.

NOCTURNE.

Mysterious Night! what memories
Thou bringest in thy starry train,
Of days long gone, and friends whose lips
Once kind are mute forevermore,—
Those dear, dead loves that came to bless
My life awhile and went their way!
Inebriant fragrances that blent
In summer eves with moonbeams pale,
And left a half-remembered sense
Of holy presences unseen
That hovering lightly near our world,
Gave glory to a fleeting dream.

See! where the moon
With golden light
Floods yonder hills
And misty vales!
Dark, waving woods
And moaning winds
Bewailing, weep
With solemn chant
Earth's passing joys.

Phantoms of other days return to me,
And whisper mockingly: "Lost! lost for-e'er,—
Good deeds thou might'st have done, the kindly word
Thou might'st have said to soothe some restless heart!"
Anon within the silent chambers of the soul
Glide spectral forms like white-robed visitants,
The ghosts of buried fears that rise again,
And mutter in strange tongues vague prophecies
Wherein are mingled grief and joy and pain.

How wearily, how wearily,
With haggard brows the wan hours pass
Adown the dusky aisles of night!
But, lo! a tender, radiant star
Hangs tremulous in eastern skies,—
Morn's pulses stir; in a new world
Of high resolves and golden hopes
Ten thousand voices sing: "The Dawn!"

WITHIN THE VEIL.

Methought I woke beyond the bourn of time and space
Within the veil where God and human souls are face to face.
At first a freedom felt my soul, and then a loneliness
For something gone that with the soul maketh our perfectness.

Is heaven heaven for soul alone without its body there?—
Came as celestial lightnings flash swift answer to my prayer.
Center of dazzling radiance 'twas mine to see as spirits can
Our human form all glorified, the likeness of the Son of Man.

A little lower then my rapt spirit bent its gaze
To where an orb of splendor from the Center drew its rays.
Clothed with the sun the One Immaculate was seen,
A woman ruling mighty hosts of heaven as their Queen.

Apocalyptic wonders I beheld with love and awe,
God's unutterable secrets not revealèd in His law.
"I know that my Redeemer lives,"—came remembered words
to me,
Earth-echoed,—"In my flesh my Savior I shall see."

SYMPATHY.

How many a heart
In gloom apart
With all its treasures locked,
Might open wide
With words to guide
A world that scorned and mocked!

Wouldst know, my dear,
A passage clear
To all that wealth untold?
You hold the key,—
'Tis sympathy
Will open hearts of gold.

TO A VIOLET.

O violet, so deeply blue,
Whence came your sweetness? whence your hue?
You shine amid the bright May-blooms,
And gladden all the woodland glooms.
Once in a May-time long ago,
I heard a voice love-tuned and low,
Softly repeat
The legend sweet.
(O happy memories of olden days,
Of youth and love and pleasant country-ways.)

"A shred of the robe of the Mother-Maid,
A thread of the mantle of Queen Marie,
Torn by a spine of the black-thorn tree,
Took root in earth,
And the soil gave birth
To the fairest bloom of the flowery glade."

Dear love, the blue
Of the violet's hue
Has flecked the green of your grave for years;
And I live on
Though you are gone—
(O the weary burden of life that bears
No balm but the balm of silent tears.)
O Julie, rest
In your sheltered nest,
Safe from life's tempest of doubts and fears.

O violet so sweet and true,
There are tears on your petals blue—
Tears from the depths of a stricken heart,
From the silent gloom of a life apart.
To God alone
Is my sorrow known:
(Ah me! it is better so,—
'Tis best that the world should never know.)
Aye, sweetheart, rest;
God knoweth best.

THE ANNUNCIATION.

An Angel's flight through the midnight skies,
The whispered word of a Virgin blest,
A ray of light from the Central Sun,
"Et Verbum caro factum est."

FAREWELL TO SUMMER.

Farewell! Farewell! the sun is setting,
We walk our last on Lake Bemidji shore,
Where white-capped waves with loud, unwonted fretting
Grieve, for the happy summer days are o'er,—
Farewell! Farewell!

There's not a song-bird left in all the wildwood;
There's not a flower our searching eyes to greet;
Sad is the distant murmur of the pine trees,
And yellow leaves are falling at our feet,—
Farewell! Farewell!

No more we'll seek for woodland treasures,
For wild blue-bells and dainty maiden-hair,—
Sweet summer's gone with all its golden pleasures,
When every sound in nature was a prayer,—
Farewell! Farewell!

THE POET.

His ear was attuned to the music of woodland and meadow and stream,
His vision enraptured by glories that only a poet can dream;
He wove from the colors of morning, from sunlight and shadow and rain
Songs of beauty that thrilled through long ages, and soothed many a pain.
Men were better because he had lived, and he blest the world where he trod,
For he sang to the hearts of his fellows thoughts from the Heart of God.

VOCATION.

I was a child amid my father's fields;
A voice as coming from the tree-tops tall
Or wild winds blown from far-off, lonely wealds,
Was whispering to me, "Leave all! Leave all!"

I was a youth in crowded cities gay,
Where men before the idol Pleasure fall;
'Twas at a reckless, merry, midnight play,
I heard aghast dread words, "Leave all! Leave all!"

I was a man with mighty power to rule;
Men came and went obedient to my call.
Once when the world clapped hands,—"Thou fool,"
A low voice sternly said, "Leave all!"

And all was left to follow where it led,
That sweet, dread voice that held my soul in thrall;
Since then, dear Master, in Thy footsteps red
I walk with heavenly joy, my God, my All!

How good Thou art, dear Lord! In craven fears
I fled Thee far; but still Thy blessed call
With loving care pursued me through the years:
"Take up thy cross and follow Me! Leave all!"

RESURRECTION.

I know that love's true perfectness
Is sealed by death and pain,
And love to reign eternally
Must die, and rise again;
For my dear, dead love that was laid away
With mourning and bitter tears,
Arose at the call of a Voice divine
To live through endless years.

ON THE LAKE.

A pathway of gold to the rising moon
Over the beautiful lake,
To where on a lonesome, piny shore
The shining wavelets break!

How swiftly our boat over waters dark
Glided in rhythmic sweep!
And we looked to the paling stars above
That changeless night-watch keep.

Oh! sacred the thought of that autumn night,
Even the silence was prayer,
For God's deep wonders were all around,
And we felt His presence there.

THE WIND AND THE ROSES.

Where it was I read so sad a fable?
Memory fails,—a volume long-forgotten,
Some old classic, doubtless, Greek or Persian,
Yellow, maybe, with the dust of ages.
Just the story I remember,—gone the beauty
Of that quaint old author's telling,
Who sincerely wrote his own conviction
As if Israfel had so revealed it.
'Neath your learned, complex modern phrases
Lurks the skeptic thought, a question ever,
Subtly robbing all our old ideals
Of their truest charm—
A critic? I? Nay, truly,—
But you wait my homely English version.
"In the sweetest bud the eating canker dwells,"
That's Shakespeare,—Shakespeare knew his theme. I follow:

Once within a lovely Eastern garden—
You have heard, no doubt, of Kashmir's Valley?—
Roses bloomed, fair, fragrant, queenly roses;
Overhead the June sky with its splendors,
Clouds that drifted, floated, came to anchor
In a golden western haven.

Minstrel zephyrs softly sang their love-songs
Bringing to the fair cheeks of the roses
Mantling blushes,—and they dreamed their day-dreams.
Came at last some wand'ring caterpillars,
Handsome, truly, with ambitious daring,—
O'er the fragrant rose-leaves creeping, creeping,
Brilliant strangers clinging with persistence.

Euros, wise old wind, foresaw their danger,
Shouted as he came: "Shake off your caterpillars!"
Swept he through the garden, and each blossom
Docile to his voice, shook her soft petals,—
All save one, and she, the fairest,
Looked with pity on a tiny caterpillar,
Drew him close within her tender rose-heart.

—Well, that bright June day was swiftly over;
Peeped the stars through stately, waving palm-trees;
Slept the roses in the garden, happy,—
All save one, and she the fairest.
(Why do sweetest hearts ache most, I wonder?)
Shone the mystic, Indian moonlight
Through the soft, enchanted night; its radiance
Fell unheeded; magic odors gave no pleasure;
Music of the bulbul's note was pain.
Morning came,—it was the Feast of Roses,—
Gul Reazee,—so the Persians call it.
All the beauteous flowers of the valley
Fresh with dew, uplifted tender faces
To the glad caresses of the Sun, their King,—
All save one, who drooped her shrunken petals;
For the little, false love cherished fondly
'Gainst a wiser will, a canker proving,
Stole her peace, her life, her peerless beauty,
Once the fairest rose in all that garden,
Queenliest flower in Kashmir's lovely Vale.

Nay, Friend, I need not point the moral of the fable;
'Tis clear that seeming holy cause or high ambition
Often proves a blight and not a blessing;
And the darling scheme we long had cherished
Finds nor place nor welcome at the Feast of Roses.

SWALLOWS AT EVENING.

Thousands of swallows
  At coming of night!
Swift glance that follows
  Their wild, circling flight!

Where is their hiding-place?
  When will they rest?
Will each find abiding place
  Safe in its nest?

In the love of the Master,
  The birds of the air
Need fear no disaster,
  They bide in His care.

THE CITY OF PEACE.

It lies far away from earth's sorrows and joys,
Far away from the world and its glittering toys;
And yet in the midst of all these may be found,
Serene, undisturbed by wild conflicts around.
In each human soul God can build if we will,
His own Holy City where all storms are still;
But no one can know thee till self-motives cease
By Way of Abandonment, City of Peace.

NIAGARA.

Niagara! 'twas near dawn, and listening to the roar
Of many mighty waters,
My thoughts went back to primal days of yore
When dusky sons and daughters
Of savage tribes, in silence and amaze
First wond'ring looked on thee
In morning's light, and thought to gaze
On some vast deity.

Omnipotence! before faith dawns, in darksome hour
Is heard thy Voice appalling,
And we, afraid, discern not Beauty there but Power,
Albeit Love is calling.—
Around the Throne perchance there shall appear
The thousands who have trod
These wild gray rocks, and learned to worship here
One great and holy God.

AN ALCHEMIST.

(Brother Francis muses):

"I have found at last the Philosopher's Stone
And surely my riches have suddenly grown!
For each thought and each word and each act I touch
With the question: What does God think of it?—Such
Wealth as the money-kings hoard and hold
Seems poor and mean by my stores of gold."

BEFORE A STATUE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

A meek-browed maiden, there she stands
With downcast eyes and folded hands,
Chiseled in Parian marble white,
Fair symbol of her soul's pure light.
Meek,—but the dragon beneath her feet
Writhes, crushed fore'er by that Virgin sweet;
Her eyes downcast,—she views the earth
Brought back to Heaven by her Son's birth.
Her folded hands have stayed the rod,
For they held as a Babe the Lord our God.
Her lips are mute, but they said the word
That jubilant angels attentive heard,
That won redemption for you and me—
"Ecce! Ancilla Domini."

A LETTER.

A morning of gloom, and the fretful rain
Incessantly beat on my window-pane.
"Cheer-up! cheer-up!" sang an instinct true,
"A letter is coming, is coming for you."
That postman's whistle clear and shrill
Sounds in my ear as music still;
For a letter came, and the day grew bright,
And my soul was flooded with love's dear light;
And the world was glad—will be glad alway,
Because of the letter that came today.

HIDDEN VICTORIES.

Methought there came to me in dreams at dead of night
One who, despised of men, was held in evil fame;
He bared his breast, and spake: "Read thou my heart aright,
And knowing all, O friend, thou'lt pity me, not blame."

Ah me! that thou might'st read what words were writ therein,
And judge less harshly. Marathon nor Trasimene
Record such victories as here, o'er hosts of sin
And demon foes, in living characters were seen.

Men viewing but the outward show of things, avow
All lost, nor count the hidden strife. Life's bitter woe,
Repentant tears, the fierce soul-struggle, thinkest thou
Shall unrecorded be in Heaven? Nay, not so!

FAILURE.

Divinely taught through patient centuries,
One lesson men are slow to understand;
They cannot learn,—nay, *will* not were the word,—
That where o'er lives men FAILURE write, God sees
In golden characters SUCCESS. His hand
Rewrites the epitaph the world averred.

To save mankind, to right the wrong
Christ chose the folly of the Cross;
Unto the weak, th' unlearned, 'twas given to fill
Succeeding years with glory. World-wisdom, the strong
Power is baffled. He has taught that failure, loss,
Ignoble death may be a triumph still.

"NOLI FORAS EXIRE."

I sought for God in variant ways of love,
  In stately cities builded high with pelf;
I sought Him in the starry realms above,—
  And lo! I found Him here within myself.

"TRISTIS USQUE AD MORTEM."

Art sad, poor heart, with weight of woe
Murmuring that thou must suffer so?
Remember Him who mourning saith:
"My soul is sorrowful unto death."

COLUMBUS AT VALLADOLID.

Nay, Father, bear with me a little while,
Urge not tonight the need of silent rest;
Tomorrow I shall rest, for well I know
Tomorrow holds nor noon nor eve for me,
And here at Valladolid is the end.
Open the casement, there!—and let me look
Once more upon the deep Castilian skies;
This sweet Ascension eve, the May-moon's curve
The old familiar constellations shine!
When next they rise, beyond them far my soul
Shall be with God.
But now old memories
And half-forgotten scenes come back again,—
My boyhood's dreams in sunny Italy,
The wild sea-journeyings, the storms and stress
Of weary years. Wherever ship had sailed
I sailed remoter seas; large hope sustained,
Upbore me in my quest of other lands,
My mission's proof of authenticity,—
The Gospel preached to nations manifold,
And savage peoples brought to Christian faith.—
But oh, the fetters, how they galled my wrists!
—That largest scar is Bobadilla's mark,
May God forgive him as I freely do,—
My soul they could not fetter!—Where was I?
The memory of those old Genoa days!
I know not how or when my dream began.
Perhaps the sphere the Christ-Child held empalmed,
Or far Atlantis, Plato's fancied isle,
The Tuscan's vision, or the Stagirite
Awoke that irresistible desire
Ordained by God to work His purposes.
I cannot truly tell, but this I know,
At life's new morn it seemed a part of me.

Oh, the hard self-schooling where with meager means,
And forced to grope my slow and painful way,
—My hair was almost white at thirty years,—
I gleaned the scattered science of the world.
My soul was burning with its pent-up fires,
And Toscanelli's treatise fanned the flame.

Forever calling, calling from the West
Were voices crying, "Come!" In Heaven's hand
I stood. A mystic revelation seemed
To bid my heart be brave; and while I walked
The common ways of life, my enterprise
Sublimely great such inspirations brought
As lifted me above the sordid throng.
To boundless regions vast where peopled isles
Await the light of dawn, my ships should bear
His banner Who redeemed the world. His Church
Would mighty nations rule from pole to pole.
'Twas not a foolish dream, for time shall prove
Its truth. Her majesty, the gracious queen
Whose pledgèd jewels ransomed many souls,
Hath found eternal peace; where men shall speak
My name, her name will be a benediction.

What pride that summer day on Palos' strand!
My ships were manned, the mystery of the sea
Lay all before,—the sea—the swelling sails—
Diego come—Felipa mia—where—
Your pardon, Father, for my wandering thoughts,—
But call Fernando when the end is near.

Meseems once more to float upon the sea.
'Tis evening. List! they sing my Vesper Hymn,
Salve Regina! From isles of spice and palm
Soft breezes blow full fragrant, and the stars
Are mirrored in the ocean, tropic calm.

—Was that a nightingale's clear note?
Nay?—But someone called to me; a voice
More sweet than music filled my soul,—a song
Of golden hopes fulfilled, heard long ago
An April morn in Andalusia.

Again the sails are set that westward bear
My gallant crew,—is Martin Pinzon there?—
Cipango—that way lies our goal,—a new
Crusade shall find the Holy Sepulchre!
Is all prepared? Be ready at the dawn.
The dusky children of this strange new world
Will gather wonderingly when you shall sing
Tomorrow's Mass in aromatic groves.

Once more, O Father, say, "Absolvo te!"—
In manus tuas, Domine,—at last
My keel has cut into the Silent Sea;
No surging billows roar, but all is still—
Calm as the waters near San Salvador.—
Does morning break with all its olden charm,
Ascension morn?—Yon dayspring seems
A light that shines from an eternal shore!

MYSTERIES.

Birth and Death,
Death and Birth!
What scientist can fathom these
Common daily mysteries?

Ah me, the night was long,
A night of pain;
But when the morning star looked through the pines,
Earth smiled again;
And like a soul set free from terror's dark confines,
A bird broke into song.
Then,—a celestial herald bearing respital,—
Dawn spread her wings o'er Lakeside Hospital.

Across a dimly lighted corridor
Like echoes from some troubled shore
Came moanings of resistance
To some strong Power's insistence,
Only as feeble nature can,
With sighs and gaspings vainly spent, until
Faint and more faint they grew, and all was still,
For Death had claimed a Man.

Meanwhile, within an eastern room
Where light was fast dispelling gloom,
And at that selfsame hour,
Were other wrestings,
Were cryings and protestings
Because a different power
Had claimed its own, the Power of Life;
With useless cry that morn
Against long years of hope and fear, of doubt and strife,
A Man was born.

Death and Birth,
Birth and Death!
Can scientism fathom these
Old, abysmal mysteries?

THE WINEPRESS.

A great soul's noble thoughts were crushed
By sorrow, exile, wrong,
And forth to cheer mankind there gushed
The rich red wine of song.

TO A WILD ROSE.

Flower of the wayside frail and fair,
O Sweet Wild Rose,
Your fragrance gladdens the summer air
When life o'erflows.
Won by the charm of your pale, pure face
Some passerby
May bear you far from your sheltered place
To droop and die.—
Into the world to suffer wrong,—
O love, beware.—
Where canker and bale and blight are strong
To bring despair.—
Far from your home in an evil hour
To learn life's woes;
For beauty is oft a fatal dower,
My Wild Sweet Rose.

THY TODAY.

(St. Augustine)

In Thee, O God, Today shall never end,
And yet in Thee it cometh to its close;
Sun-rising and sun-setting dost Thou send
And night when weary nature seeks repose.
But there where years are not thrust out by coming years,
Nor hour nor week nor month doth pass away,
Where day commences not with end of yesterday,
Nor ends with morrow's dawn, it ever is Today.

How many years, O God, how many years
Have flowed away
Through Thy Today,
From it received their measure and their mould
Of being! Never new and never old,
Unchangeable Thou art, Most High, and still
All changing, Who doth earth and heaven fill.

What things, O God, tomorrow's light shall see
And all beyond in Thy Today must be;
And yesterday and whatso passed before
Are found therein, the same forevermore.
Today with Thee
Is all Eternity.

"MAGNES ANIMARUM."

O Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament,
Where'er through all the busy day my steps are bent,
My thoughts, my heart as needle to its pole,
Are drawn to Thee, dear Magnet of my soul.

A VOICE.

"Vain, vain, vain, all in vain!"
Sigh of the night-wind or sound of the rain,
Murmur of brooklets or ocean's loud calling,
Music in tenderest harmonies falling,
Tones of the friends that are dearest can never
Silence one Voice that will haunt me forever.

"Love, love, love, all in love!"
My spirit is drawn from earth-joys far above
To follow the Voice that forever is leading
My poor wayward soul, with its low, earnest pleading,
That calls me, forgiven, to Love's blessed home,—
And my yearning heart answers, "Rabboni, I come!"

THE CAPTIVE.

Against the bars of this cage of life
My soul oft beats her wings,
And falls back panting from the strife
To dream of wondrous things,—
Of Beauty Infinite unveiled
Where music fine with notes
To "Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus," scaled,
Through space unbounded floats.
Some day a Hand will ope the door,
A Voice will say: "Be free
To wing and sing forevermore,
Thine is eternity!"

ATTAINMENT.

Somewhere long ago
In the Valley of Youth—I know
Not how nor when
(So much hath chanced since then),
A Voice that thrilled with love,
From mountain peaks above
Called to my soul: "Arise!
See yonder glowing skies!
O'er Hills of Peace they bend.
Through rocks and briars ascend,
Your truer home is there;
Steep paths are found by prayer,
Heights won by sacrifice!"

What matter now the tears
Of weary, weary years,
The days of dark despair
Or sleepless nights of care?
Led by the Voice of Truth
That called to me in youth
My upward striving soul
Hath reached at last the goal
Of rest for tired feet
After the dust and heat.
Here lips forever praise
God's blest and wondrous ways;
For doubt and toiling cease,
And life's calm evening rays
Gild fair the Hills of Peace.

INDIAN SUMMER.

Stillness everywhere in field and wood,
  Far off on sunlit hills a purple haze,—
November in a tender, reminiscent mood
  Dreams wistful dreams of golden summer days.

SONGS OF HOME.

We sing, we sing as time's swift shuttle flies,
And weave our dreams of unforgotten days,
Of home or country sorrowfully left;
At last, homesick, we turn with longing eyes
To Heaven, and meet a loving Father's gaze,—
So run two threads of gold within the weft.
Into an exile's heart such dreams will come,
And all earth's truest songs are songs of home.

SONG OF THE MYSTIC.

O Central Sun! O Love! O Fire!
My whole life's bound, my heart's desire,
Updrawn by Thy swift, burning rays
My rapt soul suffers many ways.
Earth falls away; nor time nor motion
Disturbs that vast eternal ocean
Of light and love where Beauty renders
Rich dole to life—a world of splendors.
Pierced through by Love's mysterious wound,
From joyful pain my soul hath swooned.
O God! God! God! is Heaven so blest?
O mystic Sleep! O Death! O Rest!

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